



COMPUTER SCIENCE WORK GROUP — AUGUST 2017

Meeting. The computer science work group, as established in the 2017 Legislative Session by [SF 274](#) (Computer Science Act), met in Des Moines on August 15, 2017. The work group is made up of education stakeholders including State senators and representatives, K-12 and higher education school leaders and teachers, and leadership from multiple other education organizations across Iowa.

The work group heard a presentation from representatives from [Code.org](#), a leading organization focused on computer science education and computer science education research. The conversation focused around the question, “What is computer science?” A key point of their presentation was the difference between computer literacy and computer science - the ability to use technology versus the ability to create technology. The presenters cautioned that both skills are vital to a strong computer science program.

Panel – Other States. There was a panel discussion with representatives from Arkansas, Nevada, Rhode Island, and Washington about the genesis and ongoing work of computer science programs in those states. Each state has approached computer science education in a unique way:

- Arkansas – In the spring of 2015, the state legislature passed Act 187 that required every high school in Arkansas to offer at least one computer science class the following fall. Arkansas simultaneously created online classes for schools that did not have computer science teachers, and ramped up computer science certification by providing funding for teacher recertification and professional development in computer science. There was a \$5.0 million appropriation in each of the first two years of the program. There is now a line-item \$2.5 million to pay for ongoing expenses, including continued outside professional development, certification programs for teachers, and the eight FTE positions that work throughout the state to provide professional development.
- Nevada – Nevada’s task force on computer science put forth [recommendations](#) in fall 2016 regarding computer science in the state. The Nevada Department of Education will convene a writing team to collaborate on the state computer science standards in August 2017.
- Rhode Island – The computer science initiative in Rhode Island is spearheaded by Governor Gina Raimondo, who committed \$2.4 million to teacher professional development in computer science. Teachers across the state can voluntarily participate in computer science professional development; subsequently, computer science is not housed in a single department (i.e. math, science, or career and technical education [CTE]), as any teacher can volunteer for the professional development. Rhode Island does not have a generalized computer science teacher certification, though they do have a certification for the CTE stranded computer science courses.
- Washington – The Washington legislature passed [HB 1813](#) during the 2015 - 2016 session with bipartisan support. This Bill set out framework for computer standards, established a grant program with matching funds of \$2.0 million, and created a computer science endorsement for teachers seeking to teach computer science classes. In Washington, computer science is both integrated into existing curriculum and offered in discrete classes.

Panel – Local and National Experts. The work group heard discussion from a panel of local and national experts on the pros and cons of various scenarios for rolling out computer science requirements in Iowa. The work group then had small group discussion about the same scenarios.

The next meeting of the work group is scheduled for September 13, 2017.

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